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29 March 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Benjamin H. Read
Executive Secretary
Department of State

SUBJECT : World Veterans Federation (WVF) Contacts with
Vietnamese in Algiers

1. Per my 29 March conversations with Mr. Walsh and Mr. Rosenthal, we believe the Department should be aware that the World Veterans Federation (WVF) is following up its contacts in Algiers with representatives of Hanoi and the NLF. WVF President Dte Van Laeschot made the initial overture to the Vietnamese in early February, pursuing the WVF's 1966 General Assembly resolution to offer itself as a go-between for negotiations toward peace in Vietnam. He is now planning a second trip to Algiers, to discuss with the Vietnamese the responses he received from U.S. officials.

2. Judge Hubert Will, chairman of the WVF's U.S. Council, on receiving the first letters about Van Laeschot's trip communicated their contents to Under Secretary Katzenbach, who is a personal friend of his. Mr. Katzenbach's response apparently was that the letters were interesting but did not really offer anything new, and that although the WVF could do no harm by following up the initial overture, he was not optimistic about gaining any results. Mr. Katzenbach's office then drafted an official reply for Judge Will to send to the WVF Paris office.

3. Judge Will forwarded the official letter and also sent an informal suggestion of his own. The letter was not cleared with the Department or the Agency, although it was briefly mentioned to Mr. Katzenbach (to whom Judge Will has sent copies of both letters). Basically, Judge Will proposes a plan whereby both sides in the conflict would -- under some sort of neutral inspection -- agree to stop introducing additional men or war materials into Vietnam and would bring in only the necessary food for the men already there.

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as a first step toward a cease fire. He is aware that the North Vietnamese would probably not accept such a plan, but suggested it might be worth a further try to find out.

4. The WVF is now trying to arrange a follow-up trip to Algiers for President Van Lengchet on March 16-19. He would be seeking to clarify two points: 1) request more positive assurance that Hanoi and the NLF would not insist on agreement that bombing cessation be permanent or unconditional before talks, and 2) the Government of South Vietnam should participate in any preliminary talks.

5. Mr. Van Lengchet is totally unwitting of Agency interest in the WVF, and the WVF's efforts are not being made at the Agency's behest. If the Department wishes to notify its Ambassador in Algiers of Van Lengchet's impending visit, we suggest that these points should be clearly made.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

GAC:mcn

Orig & 1 - Addressees

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1 - [redacted]
1 - [redacted]
1 - DDP
1 - C/PE
1 - C/CA
1 - SVN/NLF file *WY atts*
1 - State Liaison *WY memo (wyo atts)*
1 - GAC Chrono
1 - VAS Chrono

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